INTRODUCTION

The article which follows was not produced by the PWM; it began life as a sociology graduate school paper submitted to Simon Fraser University in April of 1976. This article, “Progressive Workers Movement: Development of Dependency Theory” is included because it is *about* PW, or, more specifically about the development within the journal “Progressive Worker” of a Marxist-Leninist analysis of Canadian class society.

In December of 1975 I interviewed a dozen former members of PWM as well as a roughly equal number of former members of other Marxist groups. During this process, Jack Scott, PW editor from 1964 to 1970 offered to proofread the article. This opportunity was nothing I had to ponder more than a second or two. Jack and I spoke frequently via the phone and met several times over the winter of 1975-1976 to discuss the article, especially within the context of what had been motivating us from 1964 to 1970.

In the 1970s academia euphemized and sanitized the study of imperialism as studies in ‘metropole/hinterland relations.’ Nonetheless, this study is one of examining the evolving concepts within PW of the nature of Canada’s ruling class and the dynamics of its relationship with US imperialism. It is also a ‘content analysis’ of the people who made up the Progressive Workers Movement. All sixty individuals were considered by both of us and there was complete agreement (after some really good arguments) on the final number crunching. On page 172 of *A Communist Life* Jack states: “If you want to talk about a proletarian movement we were it. No other group in the country was to the same extent that we were.” That statement likely was informed through the research we shared during the composition of this article. PWM truly was proletarian atypical. We were aware at the time that we were a predominantly proletarian outfit - we simply hadn’t reviewed the literature to discover just how atypical we were. Incidentally, any of my field notes that could possibly identify any individual were destroyed upon the submission of the paper.

Jack’s proofing and advice almost certainly elevated the final draught beyond anything I might have done on my own. Any errors, omissions or other defects are entirely my responsibility.

dbr
Merritt, BC
2015

THE PROGRESSIVE WORKERS MOVEMENT:

DEVELOPMENT OF DEPENDENCY THEORY.

BACKGROUND

In October of 1964 the first issue of Progressive Worker ran off the press and was enthusiastically assembled for distribution by the members of the Movement giving its name to this journal. The Progressive Workers Movement (PWM) had announced itself to the world at large.

It was within the Communist Party of Canada (CPC) however that the true beginnings of the Movement are to be found. The Sino-Soviet dispute was moving beyond the era of debate through the foils of Yugoslavia and Albania. Comrade Togliatti was no longer required as straw man for the polemicizing giants: the gloves were being removed. Within the CPC, initial debate leading to the eventual split predated the larger world development. Of the same order in that it could be reduced to the same contradiction of Marxism-Leninism versus revisionism, the local debate though had specific Canadian implications. The CPC had ossified its policy for achieving Canadian socialism around an analysis both erroneous and outdated. Britain was seen as the metropole toward which Canada had developed as a dependent hinterland. Acceptance of this basic premise led the CPC to tactical errors, i.e. chiefly a non-appreciation of the role of pro-U.S. elites; of the role of U.S. unions in Canada; and of the forces represented by Canada's various bourgeois parliamentary political parties.

The debate was at its point of greatest intensity within a Vancouver security club of the CPC. There, a group around veteran Party member Jack Scott was developing and propounding an alternative analysis with resultantly differing policy proposals. Canada was seen as a hinterland

dependent upon the United States of America. The organized working class (especially in basic productive sectors of the economy) was analysed as being in fief to imperialist labour overlords. No essential distinction was perceived that would differentiate one bourgeois political party from any other: all competed to achieve power through alienating Canadian material and human resources to U.S. imperial interests in return for non-productive short term gains.

Early in 1964 the judgement was made that the battle had proceeded so far as was possible within the confines of the old Party. The dissidents, realizing that the CPC was a political vehicle dysfunctional to their purposes, debated alternatives. Many were in the security club due to their membership in other organizations – mainly those that barred Communist Party members from their ranks. Despite this factor it was decided to start a new party on open political ground. The closing lines of a front page editorial in the first issue of Progressive Worker well capture their attitude:

> "…we will be heard – and we will not retreat. We have not occupied the stage for the purpose of soothing ruffled nerves – but rather to act like a goad. We are here to flan the flames of discontent, and disdain to dissimulate or hide our intentions from any man – friend or foe.
>
> We will speak out consistently and unwaveringly for the destruction of the system of capitalist exploitation and its replacement with a new Socialist society in which man can, at last, reach his full stature."

AIMS AND MEANS

The aims of the present study are two. First, to provide a reasonably thorough statistical and analytical study of the PWM with an eye to showing its composition to be (literally) graphically

different from other representative left wing movements. Also to be examined is the socio-economic basis of membership which to a great extent determined organizational emphasis and policy direction.

In the latter half of the study the second aim will be pursued: that of chronologically and thematically analysing the development of a theory of dependency by this group.

The sample group from which our statistical - analytical treatment will flow is comprised of sixty individuals. The total membership of the PWM throughout Canada and from the years 1964 to 1969 was well in excess of one hundred. Deleted therefore from our sample are those persons in the following categories; a) those who were members of the short-lived and often semi-dormant Toronto chapter of PWM and whose individual contact with the Vancouver chapter was geographically discreet. Included however are those who over time were members of both chapters. Also deleted are b) those who were members (or at a later juncture of organizational development designated as candidate members) of the Vancouver chapter for but a matter of weeks; and c) those who resided in isolated communities continuously and are better considered as ‘contacts’ than as members in the structurally active sense.

The total of these sixty persons were not all members at any one particular time. Some memberships overlapped but briefly, others had departed by the time yet others joined. All sixty were active within the organizational structure for periods of from roughly six months up to the full six years.

ANALYSIS

First let us first look – before dealing with the full sample of sixty – at the charter members of the Movement. Discounting those in situation b) above we have twenty-six founding members whom we shall consider in tabular form below.

Table 1: Charter Members of PWM

1.1	Male	18	1.2	Former CPC Security Club Members	16
	Female	8		Non-Security Club Members	10
	Total	26			26

Two salient points should be made: six of the eight females in table 1 were wives of members; i.e. twelve of the twenty-six original members were marriage partners of comrades. Secondly, a few husbands who had been in the security club and became PWM founders had not been comrades to their wives in the CPC security club. That is to say, four of the ten non-security club members seemingly recruited between the time of splitting with the CPC and the establishment of PWM constitute questionable 'new recruitment.' In addition, of the ten persons in table 1:2 one was a member of the caucus of the CPC security club, although technically refused membership by the Communist Party. Therefore a re-evaluated table would reveal:

Table 2: Charter Members PWM

From Security Club	21
Non-Security	5
	26

The development of this type of statistical evidence obtains greater meaning when we consider the early PWM self-image as a mass movement rather than as an elitist 'iron cadre' movement.

To develop the full sample we can see the following:

Table 3: PWM Full Sample by Sex

Male	40
Female	20
	60

Table 4: PWM Full Sample by Age and Sex

Age	Male	Female	Total	Percentage of Sample
18-23	18	10	28	47%
24-29	9	4	13	22%
30-35	1	1	2	3%
36-41	6	1	7	12%
42-47	3	2	5	8%
48-53	2	1	3	5%
54-59	1	1	2	3%
	40	20	60	100%

From table 3 we see a statistical imbalance in favour of male members, a fact atypical of left wing organizations (i.e. New Left, revolutionary tendencies) contemporary to PWM in North America (Jacobs and Landau, 1966).

Table 4 has several points requiring discussion. The skewing towards youth seems indicative of left wing movements in that nearly half are under twenty-four years of age upon gaining group inclusion, while just over two-thirds have yet to reach their thirtieth birthday. Groups 30-35 and 36-41 together are comprised of, in part, two married couples and two semi-lumpenized individuals in the latter group whose stay was among the shortest of any in this sample. This tapering off of membership past age thirty may in part be due to the life experience norm of working class couples to devote these years primarily to raising a family – a point to which we shall return.

Table 5 Socio-Economic Background of PWM Members

Working Class		Middle Class	
Males	Females	Males	Female
35	13	7	5
Total Working Class 48		Total Middle Class 12	

Definitions are obviously necessitated by the use of the terms ‘working class’ and ‘middle class’ in table 5. By ‘working class’ is meant that class of people who exist by selling their labour power to the owners of the means of production, the capitalist class. Included are not only those associated with resource extraction and manufacturing but also clerical, retail and general service workers. The ‘middle class’ is not a true class in the Marxian sense, but an arbitrary intellectual concept having validity in reality due not only to high placement on income, residence area and education scales but also due to sheer quantitative life experience removal from points of

production. This ‘class’ includes some professionals (doctors, lawyers – especially the corporate variety) and a host of managerial and technocratic functionaries.

These are the definitions employed throughout this study. With regard to the PWM, tighter definition is possible in some senses. Of the twenty-eight youngest members (18-24 years), seventeen came from households in Vancouver East and adjacent areas of Burnaby where one or both parents were employed in an occupation usually unionized. Seven of these in fact, when younger concurrently attended the same high school.

This overbalance in favour of working class backgrounds of members is supremely atypical of left wing movements in Canada or in North America (Jacobs and Landau, 1966; Teodori, 1969; Rubin, 1970). Even greater is the imbalance if it is added that eight of the twelve persons designated as middle class were members of the Movement during the second three years of its existence, but not for the first three years.

Although the smallness of numbers may make the observation suspect it can be seen that the sex ratio among working class members approaches three to one, males to females. The middle class sample is a columnar transference of one away from unity. Something closer to unity is generally expected in a predominantly middle class - comprised left wing group. Also reflected is the greater tethering to traditional roles of the working class females. This becomes abundantly clear when it is opined that approximately half of the working class females became Movement

members primarily upon their husbands' desires for them so to do (private conversations, ex-members PWM, 1975-76).

Yet another aspect of membership composition is that of familial (usually parental) political involvement. That is, to how great an extent is radical political belief generationally transmissible? To be sure the literature occasionally gives reference to the phenomenon of the "red diaper baby" (Maeots, 1967), but how typical is this occurrence? Jacobs and Landau (1966) give indication that in the mainstream 'new left' organizations of the US such was far from rare.

To bridge the gap to Canada a lengthy albeit highly descriptive quotation follows.

> "SUPA (Student Union for Peace Action) activists pointed to similarities between Canadian and American radicals, noting that the chief distinguishing characteristic of both groups was a rejection of the middle class milieu in which they were socialized. A sociological study of the backgrounds of student activists in Chicago revealed a number of interesting characteristics, most of which were similar to characteristics frequently attributed to SUPA members. The study compared the backgrounds and families of activists and non-activists, and discovered that activists tended to come from high income families and recent immigrant stock. They were disproportionately Jewish, and less likely to have small town or rural backgrounds. Their fathers were disproportionately professionals, and both fathers and mothers were disproportionately highly educated. Their mothers were more likely to be employed. The students were more likely to have higher grades than their non-activist contemporaries, and different values, with less emphasis on career, religion and marriage. There appeared to be a continuity between the activists' values and those of their parents, who were relatively liberal or left in their political attitudes and relatively active in politics." (Maeots, 1967)

Such a description holds substantially true for various other Canadian groups, i.e. the Trotskyists, Canadian Liberation Movement, the Communist Party of

Canada (Marxist-Leninist) and even yet smaller and often little-remembered groups

(Youngblood and Rising Up Angry, for example) (Repo, 1972; also many recent conversations with members and ex-members of several of the above-named groups).

With the PWM however, we encounter atypicality as the above tables indicate. Atypicality that is, to the extent that all but one individual member can be ascertained to have come from a family having at least one parent active within the traditional left (left of the New Democratic Party or NDP). Also only one Jewish person became a member and that occurred in the period of decline.

What is the case however, is the high incidence of activity of one or both parents within either or both the trade union movement and the CCF/NDP. Given the socialization of a large group of members within Burnaby and Vancouver East such is not surprising as these areas are traditional trade union and CCF/NDP strongholds. Of the PWM membership itself, thirty-five of forty-eight working class members were usually members of a trade union, while of the twelve middle class members but one individual could be so numbered. Exactly half (twenty-four of forty-eight) of the working class members were, or had been members of the NDP. Again only one middle class member of the Movement had ever been an NDP member

Of passing interest was the dual membership of several PWM members (conterminously being NDP members). This seeming contradiction (considering the PWM analysis of the NDP) was unilaterally resolved by the NDP. The expulsion of these PWM members prevented them from

carrying out their intention to use the NDP as a recruiting ground. Such a tactic had previously borne little fruit in any event.

In the journal analysis to follow we shall maintain an awareness of this background for a possible accounting of the particular 'line' of the PWM.

THE PWM AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF DEPENDENCY THEORY

It is somewhat illuminating that in the inaugural issue of PW the word 'Vietnam' is nowhere found. At a time when other 'Canadian' left or 'revolutionary' groups were waxing indignant over events in Alabama, Indo-China and elsewhere the PWM initiated what was to become the single most important line in their publications: Canada as hinterland to US imperialism and the many ramifications of that fact.

Fully half the first issue is devoted to presenting a "Statement of Principles," of interest to our purposes mainly for a section on 'Canadian Monopoly Capitalism' which states in part:

> "With the rapid decline of British Imperialism in the post-war world and the rise to a position of dominance by US Imperialist interests, Britain's hitherto dominant position in the Canadian economy passed to the US monopolists. Canadian economy and industrial development is, therefore, under US domination and suffers the distortions and anarchy consequent on that domination.
>
> But it must also be taken into account that the main section of Canadian monopoly capitalists are in partnership with US imperialists in the exploitation of Canada.

> It is also to be noted that Canadian monopolists are imperialists in their own right and often enter into joint agreement with US imperialism for the exploitation of peoples in other lands INCLUDING US WORKERS. Canadian E.P. Taylor, Chairman of the Board of Argus Corporation (one of the largest monopolies in the world) has holdings in a score of countries, with the US being numbered among them. Cyrus Eaton and the Norris family are only two among a number of US monopolists who developed out of the Canadian capitalist class.
>
> While the Canadian bourgeoisie often express irritation and discontent about their inferior position vis-à-vis the US they can never be consistent and cannot help but make compromises with the US monopolists on all important and fundamental questions. To expect the Canadian monopoly bourgeoisie to act in a radical or progressive manner would be naïve indeed."

The above of course is naught but a sketchy overview. What would continue to be the pillars of this anti-imperialist philosophy though, were already here at square one. Canada is seen as an economic colony of first Britain, then of the US – a colonial region throughout her existence. US imperial domination is responsible for economic "distortions" and "anarchy". Canada is not seen as a colony in the traditional sense nonetheless, as a "Canadian bourgeoisie" is seen to exist. The nature of this indigenous monopoly capitalist class is perceived to have several noteworthy aspects to it. Firstly, its main section is seen as being in "partnership" with the US imperialists, yet at the same time as being in an "inferior position" to them. There is thought to be no possibility of the Canadian 'partner' disagreeing with the imperial power on any "important or fundamental questions." Yet another aspect sees the Canadian bourgeoisie as "imperialists in their own right" – but with an important distinction. This imperialism of the Canadian bourgeoisie is carried out jointly with US imperialism. So here we have a joint endeavour between partners with one partner inferior and unable to disagree on important and fundamental

questions. To then say that the Canadian partner practices imperialism in its 'own right' would suggest a contradiction in terms!

To digress for a moment, this thesis of an imperialist Canadian bourgeoisie requires little embellishment to become an absurdly vulgar and mechanistic interpretation. A 'big fish eating a smaller fish which had previously eaten a yet smaller fish etcetera' sort of viewpoint emerges. The self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninist journal Canadian Revolution (numbers one and two in particular) contain articles presenting the Canadian imperialist class as major exploiters of Third World Caribbea. The only political and military means of any consequence available to protect these Caribbean holdings are obviously those of the US. The question to be asked in light of this must be: is this Canadian 'imperialism' or is it US imperialism utilizing Canadian brokerage for historical reasons of capital penetration of Commonwealth preference markets? Rhetorical the question may be, but the implied answer would seem to have greater logic than one employing an allusion to an independent Canadian imperialism.

Hierarchical orderings of imperialist control (such as the previous fish analogy) offend in their lack of dynamism. The youngest child in a large and nasty family may well stick a pin in the dog, causing it in turn to bite the cat. What such analogies have to do with dependency theory however, is difficult to fathom. Unidimensional analyses necessarily fail to portray the essence of a dynamic process. Somewhat in this way Gunder Frank has pointed out that the imperialist metropole structures the hinterland, restricting economic possibilities to serve metropolitan needs. This, in turn, structures and restricts the metropole at its economic base creating

interdependency which in turn makes further and narrower restrictions upon the hinterland and so on. General McNaughton (1962) seemed to appreciate the existence of this dialectical development (note particularly his reference to 'vested interests' being created) when he compiled his Report upon alternative usages of the Columbia River. It could be argued that there is some doubt that the PWM recognized such considerations in their early days.

Two additional items of further note are contained within the 'Statement of Principles.' The first is the recognition of the right of the nation of Quebec to self-determination. Inasmuch as this right is supported unconditionally ipso facto little more can be said. The US imperialists and their Canadian partners are posited as common enemies of the Quebecois and Anglo-Canadian peoples with their united resistance urged.

A final point of importance is contained in the following quotation from the section entitled "Working Class Movement."

> "Organize the underpaid, unorganized majority of Canadian working people into independent and rank and file controlled Canadian unions.
>
> Lead the struggle for a return of democratic control and against the bureaucratic and reactionary officials (both Canadian and US) in the union locals – the basic organization of the movement."

Paragraph one would seem to signify that US trade unions were ideally to be excluded from such activity as expansion of unionization in the working class.

The second paragraph appears to imply several things. One would be that US unions are better than no unions at all, as they have to be democratized rather than replaced, say with Canadian unions. Nor is there apparent unquestioning acceptance of a union merely on its Canadian-ness. They too, must be democratized. A finer implication is residual in the use of the word "return" as this denotes a previous time when democracy and rank and file control held sway. The degree of accuracy to such an historical evaluation must remain open to question. Such a concept may have more agitational value than historical accuracy, for, to suggest loss through usurpation of that which once was possessed and valued legitimizes a striving for reacquisition.

RETROGRESSION

Considering the militant and uncompromising stance taken as we have seen, at the inception of the Movement, it is surprising to see an article entitled "A Suggested Legislative Program" in issue number four. The suggested priorities for the Spring, 1965 sitting of the BC Legislature are generally ones capable of eliciting agreement from the then-opposition NDP. There is a libertarian provincial bill of rights, provincial insurance scheme (at cost), a thirty-five hour work week, a minimum wage of $2.30 per hour, free higher education on merit, etcetera – none being outside the realm of NDP policy.

It is true that an attempt is made (in paragraph three) to explain away this seeming anomaly:

> "We are not optimistic about the possibility of a legislative program that will put a stop to the giveaway of our natural resources or propose the enactment of legislation that will provide for the welfare of the underpaid and overtaxed common people. Such legislation can hardly be expected short of a fundamental change in the class nature of the government."

All this is fine on the surface, but is intent congruent with possible effects? That is, can the results of implementing such proposals be seen as running counter to the previously stated maximal objectives? Such, I think, could be the case.

Calling for a thirty-five hour week is obviously based upon a desire to expand employment, Theoretically it would provide a twelve and a half percent increase – more than double the (official) unemployment rate of the day. With an increase of the minimum wage from $1.25 to $2.30 an hour one must ask from whence comes the increased wealth to be so distributed? It is possible that given no change in the class nature of the state that such full employment and wage increases will be financed not by decreased profits but by intensification of Third World exploitation among other things. Proletarian internationalism would seem to be the net loser in such a scheme. It may be a case of what Repo calls "(being) undialectical and anti-dialectical about dialectics" (Repo, 1972).

A more glaring example perhaps, of policy being formalist, reformist and economist is the section labelled "Education." It states in toto:

> "Speed up the university construction programme. Rapid expansion of facilities for all grades of education – primary, secondary, technical and vocational.
>
> Expansion of teacher training with inducements to attract capable and qualified people to this important area of endeavour.
>
> Education – up to, and including university, and all necessary textbooks, to be free and available to all who show desire and aptitude.
>
> Living allowances to be paid to those attending higher institutes of learning, provided they maintain a specified minimum standard of marks."

Here we have seemingly no consideration at all of the class nature of the educational system and its institutions, Inasmuch as a bourgeois educational system essentially serves the present ruling class it would seem contradictory to expand or enhance it.

HIATUS

Issue number six states on the cover that it contains an article entitled “US Domination of Canadian Economy.” No such article in fact exists. Issue number eight contains a lead article called “His Master’s Voice – a treatment of Lester Pearson’s and the Liberal Party’s support role of US imperialism in international diplomacy. By issue ten a letter has been drafted to accompany the giving of complementary copies of the journal to workers going on or off shift. One paragraph of the letter states that “The Progressive Workers Movement is an organization dedicated and committed to the liberation of Canada from Yankee Imperialism and its agents and traitors among the Canadian ruling circles”. Yet throughout the first year of publication (with the exceptions noted above) little more than multitudinous but vague allusions are made to US control of Canada and the many ramifications there following.

ON THE HUSTINGS (AND ELSEWHERE)

In volume two, number one (the first anniversary issue) we find the PWM running a candidate for the federal Parliament. The published election platform allows us the opportunity to see an advance in the propounding of the Movement's dependency theory.

In the preamble it is stated:

> "During almost a century of power wielded by the capitalist political parties our country has been consistently sold out by the fast-buck artists: first to British imperial interests; then to Britain and the US between the wars. Now, following the decline of Britain since the war, the profit-hungry monopolists are mortgaging our futures to US monopoly interests, and are plotting to hitch us to the American war chariot."

This is almost entirely reiteration. The ensuing legislative proposals however show a great difference from the proposals of the previous year:

> "Throughout our history the economy of our country has been under foreign imperialist domination and subject to the needs and whims of foreign monopoly interests. This control is now mainly in the hands of US Imperialists. Control is so effective that Canadian branch plants of American industry are even made subject to laws passed by the US Congress (witness the recent refusal of several companies to fill orders of flour for Cuba).
>
> Our country cannot properly develop and advance while these conditions exist. To open the road to progress we must break the foreign hold on our economy. We propose the immediate take-over of all foreign-controlled industry. Such nationalized plants to be controlled and managed by committees of workers to give them a Socialist character."

Nationalization and socialization of industry is something more in keeping with the strident tones of the first issue. The article goes on to call for the creation of secondary industry:

> "Because of our character as a supplier of raw materials to feed the manufacturing industry of the most powerful capitalist nation in the world our industrial development has been distorted and uneven. To correct this situation we must develop a secondary industry that will utilize a large part of our natural resources in the field of manufacturing. Such industry must be mainly developed by the

> state and based on Socialist principles of management as suggested for the appropriated foreign-owned industry."

Again sketchy, lacking elabouration and analysis, but definitely cognizant of the existence of underdevelopment.

A following article on the Bennett Dam (Damn) by a construction worker echoes the sentiments of the election platform. The role of US culture in producing a sense of inferiority and a colonial mentality is touched upon.

Of principal note regarding the above articles is the addressing itself of the Movement to Canadian specifics and Canadian realities. Although it is possible that individual members may have had cohesive, researched analyses of Canadian dependence to foreign imperialism it found little journal documentation within that first year of publication. Close to half of the journal's article space was given over to discussing a variety of union issues – strikes, lockouts, negotiations and co-opted leadership. News of the Third World liberation struggles and polemics with other radical groups also proliferated.

A feature length article in volume two, number two is entitled "US Imperialism in Latin America." Here is the sort of in-depth treatment one could hope to see in dealing with Canadian dependency. Pertinent quotations from a wealth of sources, well arranged statistical extensions, thoughtful analysis and projection: all are present. A but single short paragraph alludes to similarities between Canada and Latin America however.

A follow-up in the next issue makes a case for keeping Canada out of the Organization of American States. The role of United Fruit, Anaconda Copper and Standard Oil is examined but a Canadian treatment is not attempted.

Elsewhere, by the second year of publication, articles dealing with the trade union scene are increasingly developing a nationalist stance. The panacea for labour's woes is discovered in Canadian unionism. This historically is no new phenomenon, but could be seen as the resurfacing of a long-standing grievance. The inability of local unionists to deal with their situation as they see fit and the intransigence of US based officials in releasing strike funds once collected and gone south are well known defects of so-called 'international' unions. Unfortunately, the PWM like others before it was often somewhat vulnerable to criticism in blinding their eyes to the defects of many Canadian unions while attacking their US competitors.

COHESION

It is with the fifth issue of year two that a watershed is reached. The feature article "US Control of Canada's Economy," puts down for the first time anything approaching a definitive basic dependency analysis (appendix I) and contains a strategic guideline for action.

This strategy is reduced to its simplest form in the closing line: "Free the unions and we can begin the task of freeing the nation." It is of note parenthetically that this idealist line is largely

contradicted in an article contributed to Capitalism and the National Question in Canada, to wit "International Unions and the Ideology of Class Collaboration." PWM Chairman Jack Scott (also Progressive Worker editor) was the author of the journal article as well as co-author of the contribution to the Teeple reader.

Where is all this leading? Let us bring it together systematically. First, there is a chronological difference of six or seven years between the two articles, the co-authored selection appearing in 1972. Seven years' experience should logically make possible a more realistic view. A second point to be raised is the ambivalent nature of the PWM journal. No one, to the present writer's knowledge ever resolved whether it was an agitational or theoretical organ. The intention was for it to serve both functions, but often appears to fail in keeping the two functions discreet; in so doing it failed to a degree in both categories. The watershed article cited above is an excellent case in point. As Repo (1972) points out "the Canadian left has long since ceased to understand the everyday existence of working class people." The PW article certainly idealizes the working class:

> "Only the working class, by virtue of their interest in the termination of all forms of exploitation, remain consistent and unyielding in the fight against alien domination, and it is this class that must lead the fight to liberate the nation, rallying around themselves all the other forces and classes prepared to take part in the struggle."

The same mistake is not made by Howard and Scott (1972), where they state:

> "Canadian unionists are not materially or psychologically different from those in the United States. Captivated by the same concept of economism, they too equate personal security, present and future, with that of the existing social order, which means accepting United States domination of the economy, sharing with American workers concern for the stability of the American economic system, and as a direct consequence, domination of the Canadian union movement by the

> US representatives of business unionism. They believe implicitly the propaganda that says a break with the American system would reduce living standards by 25 per cent and cling the more tightly to American unions and the American system."

The desirability of achieving what constituted the original ends of the PWM remains unaltered: it is the willingness to deal with painful realities and uncomfortable complexities that differentiates the earlier from the later dependency analysis.

CANADIAN UNIONISM

As we have seen, the PWM reached the conclusion that independence and socialism could be achieved for Canada only by first freeing the trade unions from US domination. As the creation of an independent Canadian union movement was a necessary precondition, such was increasingly promoted.

A strike at Lenkurt Electric by wildcatting International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers' (IBEW) members gave the PWM an opportunity to put their theory into practice. Lenkurt, a subsidiary of General Telephone and Electronics (the parent company of BC Telephone) violated the Provincial Hours of Work Act; US union officials refused to back up worker demands for new hirings rather than the obligatory (and illegal) overtime. An ex parte injunction caused a call for a citizens' sympathy picket line. About a dozen Progressive Workers were included in the picket line of several hundreds.

The complementary roles played by organs both provincial and federal, together with the US corporation and US union in crushing the strike gave a great deal of credibility to PWM propaganda. This, in turn, helped launch the Canadian Electrical Workers (now part of CAIMAW – Canadian Association of Industrial, Mechanical and Allied Workers). Volume two, number nine devotes about a third of its space to a discussion on Canadian unionism and an attack on the CP accommodation to US unions.

For the first time in nearly two years of existence the PWM had captured some of the public spotlight, primarily as a result of their activities pertaining to the Lenkurt strike. Much of the publicity was negative, but this was to be expected given the respective sources of this verbal and written abuse. The positive responses reinforced the members' views that their theories were correct and led to an even greater emphasis on Canadian union promotion.

During the first twenty issues (pre-Lenkurt) of Progressive Worker for instance, no mention of Canadian unionism per se is found on a front cover. The second twenty numbers feature front cover leads for articles on Canadian unionism on eight occasions and a further seven feature trade union oriented articles in which there is wide textual reference to Canadian unionism. Also in the aftermath of Lenkurt was produced a brochure entitled "Trade Union Program" (appendix two).

While mainly a distillation of previous programs and articles, there are a few considerations worthy of examination. Of greatest importance is the suggestion for an "alternative labour

centre." In an earlier existence the CPC had attempted to form a confederation of Canadian trade unions independent of the American Federation of Labor (later the AFL/CIO – Congress of Industrial Organizations). This "red union" movement did have some success, but withered under concentrated attack by the US union coalition. Some segments, such as the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers remained viable into the nineteen-sixties before going under. To an extent entirely out of proportion to their numbers, the PWM was able to regenerate interest in this 'alternative centre.'

That this new confederation of Canadian unions was able to obtain an uneasy accord with the existing US – dominated Canadian Labour Congress no doubt spoke well for the rebel leadership's grasp on reality. The PWM hope for entirely separate, militant rank and file controlled unions was not to materialize however.

Yet the PWM could point to the existence of a growing segment of the trade union movement that was not directly dominated by the US unions. Even if the fervour and democratic zeal did not automatically follow, at least the first precondition was met. In point of fact it was true that greater union member involvement did initially come with independence in such unions as CAIMAW and the Pulp and Paper Workers of Canada (PPWC).

THE BROADER CONTEXT

Although increased time and energy went into the struggle to create indigenous unionism, it did not absorb the totality of the Movement's energies. Presumably what was being attempted was to achieve a synthesis of political work. This is dealt with in the "Trade Union Program:"

> "…Nevertheless, it must be noted that the strike (Lenkurt) underlined certain shortcomings in our work and it is incumbent upon us to constantly examine our activities in order to correct our style and methods of work.
>
> Some time ago we took a decision to make a concerted effort in raising the important question of the need for an independent Canadian union movement. But we abstracted this fight from the general struggle of the workers for improved living and working conditions. It is easy enough for us to recognize the importance of the struggle for an independent movement but the workers will see it only in relation to the general struggle. It will, therefore, be necessary for us to raise this question in conjunction with the whole broad front of struggle and do more effective work in pointing out that the defeat of the US bureaucracy is essential to democratic worker control of the unions and that such control is a necessary pre-requisite for turning the unions into the effective fighting organs they can and must become in order to defend the rights and living standards of the workers and free our land from alien domination."

Real concern is expressed that various points of policy of a complementary nature are being pursued in isolation, one from the other. The Movement, it seems, has not been fully aware of the interrelatedness of various forms of 'class struggle' and feels itself to have been pursuing them in isolation.

Weeks later, an article was written in response to the calling of a BC general election September 12, 1966. After pointing to the bankruptcy of the political parties involved, the article goes on to counsel workers to spoil their ballots with the slogan "For Canadian Independence: End US Domination of Canada." It is surprising to see such an abomination of a slogan put forward at this point of development. Such slogans have been criticized for their lack of class content

(Repo, 1972) but this is technically not the case. The Committee for an Independent Canada could (and has) put forward a slogan identical in content. The CIC could more aptly be designated the "Company of Indigenous Capitalists" and certainly have a class line to put forward. The trouble is that it is an anti-socialist and anti-working class line, and in the unlikely event that their daydreams were to become reality it would mean the substitution of one capitalist ruling class for another. The 'independence' is that of the weak national bourgeoisie from imperialist control. This is certainly not what the PWM intended, but it appears that they still experienced some basic conceptual confusion by their third year.

In general it can be seen though, that the overall dependency analysis takes on greater depth in the third year. Articles in the first two numbers of volume three deal in specific and down to earth analyses of such things as union constitutions, labour boards, labour acts and the like. How such institutions serve metropolitan interests is ably demonstrated with a minimum of rhetoric. That such is the case should not be a surprise if we harken back to part one of this paper. It is in dealing with the bread and butter issues personally experienced by the bulk of the membership where the PWM does best. Inconsistency and verbal abstraction appears much more in those articles dealing with things more ephemeral to members' collective life experiences. It was Mao (himself paraphrasing Marx) who said:

> "If you want to know a certain thing or a certain class of things directly, you must personally participate in the practical class struggle to change reality—to change that thing or class of things, for only thus can you come into contact with them as phenomena, only through personal participation in the practical struggle to change reality can you uncover that thing or class of things and comprehend them." (Mao Tse-Tung, Selected Works, Volume I, pp. 299-300)

In an endeavour to remain ideologically pristine, the PWM often disregarded this injunction from their major adopted ideologue. There was no rallying of forces in other aspects of endeavour than that of the arena of Canadian unionism. Impact on student and intellectual communities was fitful and on the artistic community almost negligible. Farmers, unemployed, tenant groups, welfare recipients etc. received little contact with the Movement. Occasionally poorly articulated and often downright haywire attempts to broaden its constituency were broached by the Movement. The paucity of such work was well exemplified by an early creation dubbed "Youth Against War and Fascism." This group was comprised entirely of younger PWM members and suffered from the 'mass party' illusions rampant during year one.

DECLINE

As mentioned, the PWM continued to pursue the line of resistance to US domination through freeing the trade union movement.

A multifaceted decline set in late in the third year and publishing became first abbreviated, then sporadic. Few new departures in journal documentation of dependency occurred except greater and grander arrays of statistical evidence of US economic domination.

The Movement was quite aware of this sense of decline – both in numbers and in commitment of those remaining. Lack of a total or complete dependency theory was seen as a prime cause of ideological floundering. Teleological élan could be recaptured if the total picture could be given.

Such anxieties as had arisen were sublimated into the massive project of documenting this total position. With energies absorbed by this undertaking over several months it is understandable that not only would the journal become sporadic but that it would also become more of a terse agitational offering.

It was fitting perhaps that this final and major document "Independence and Socialism in Canada" (appendix number three) should also be the PWM's swan song. Fitting in that it remains in larger part to this day the definitive statement of Canadian dependence from a Marxist-Leninist viewpoint. One need only compare the proliferating theoretical journals of today (such as Canadian Revolution) to "Independence and Socialism in Canada" to see that old mistakes in theory (with little 'practice' happening to hopefully correct same) are still being repeated.

An examination of 'Independence and Socialism' is, of itself an exacting task. What we shall concern ourselves with here are principally those themes touched upon earlier, keeping in mind that the Movement devoted the entirety of this sixty-seven page paper to theoretical aspects of the 'national question.' That is, it contains only that which would be relevant as an aspect of dependency theory. As an overview it could be stated that there is little new in this terminal document. What is equally true is that whatever the particular topic contained therein, it had rarely before been stated so clearly or so thoughtfully. What was most important is that it be presented as an interconnected whole; in this the project was largely successful.

INDEPENDENCE AND SOCIALISM IN CANADA

Following a brief "Introduction" appears a section on "Nations and Nationalism." A classical Marxist-Leninist exposition is given on the concepts of historical materialism and imperialism. The role of nationalism as ideology is broached as a topic:

"Is it not easily seen that the role of nationalism is defined precisely by whether or not it is being put forward by the oppressor or the oppressed?"

Here the Movement extricates itself from the possible charge of promoting bourgeois nationalism. The nationalism of the Canadian working class is seen as a tool to achieve proletarian hegemony within Canada, and by its very nature is unaccommodating to capitalism. Both the comprador bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie (CIC variety) become redundant under socialism.

It is valuable too, to note how "comprador bourgeoisie" is defined:

> "Originally a native house-steward in India and in China a native servant employed as head of the native staff or as an agent of European firms. Now applied to the section of the capitalists in a colony or neo-colony, who serves the interests of the imperialists. The dominant group of Canadian capitalists have always fallen into the category of comprador, serving first the cause of British Imperialism and then entering the service of US Imperialism when it became the dominant power in the economy of Canada."

Following from the introductory definitions above, the journal goes on to relate the historical progression of Canada leading up to the present. At this juncture it might prove more expeditious to go directly to the summary of this section; thence to examine specifics from that point:

> "…1. Canada has always been a colony. After 1867 she gradually attained the status of a seemingly independent state, but in fact she continued to be dominated by foreign imperialism, first British and then American.
>
> 2. We do not have and never did have an independent national bourgeoisie as our ruling class. The dominant Canadian bourgeoisie has always been the comprador bourgeoisie, a bourgeoisie closely tied to and in the service of foreign interests.
>
> 3. Our two leading political parties, the Conservatives and the Liberals, have from the beginning represented differing sections of the comprador bourgeoisie – differing only as to which imperialist power they owed their allegiance to. When in power, however, they have always served the dominant imperialist power, regardless of their preferences.
>
> 4. None of the existing political parties in Canada can – or even wants to – offer any real challenge to the foreign monopolist domination of our economy (even though many of the rank and file, particularly in the NDP may want to do so).
>
> 5. We do not have an independent trade union movement. Seventy percent of our organized workers find themselves in the so-called 'internationals,' American Trade unions controlled by the AF of L/CIO allies of the Democratic Party. For this situation, the policies of the old Communist Party of Canada are largely responsible."

Point one above is extremely reiterative, but the text spells out details not before dealt with. The emergence of a comprador class is seen as following from the Conquest of 1759. A realignment of interests saw the Quebec Church hierarchy share power with the new British mercantile class.

The demystification (of traditional interpretations) of the 1837 Rebellion deals further with this comprador class (now the Family Compact and the Chateau Clique). The Rebellion in the Canadas is treated as a failed bourgeois-democratic revolution. It is with the Durham Report in the aftermath of rebellion that accommodation is tendered to the defeated nascent national bourgeoisie. Its right to continued existence was recognized, but it was to remain politically

powerless, able to practice exploitation only in those areas where the imperial power had no great interest.

Confederation is dealt with at length but the following paragraph presents the essential argument:

> "Thus, when Confederation came, it came as a deal amongst three principal partners; the capitulationist-reformist bourgeoisie of Toronto, the comprador bourgeoisie of Montreal, and the giant British monopolies that dominated much of the economic life of Canada…All three partners were interested in Western expansion, in harnessing the economic potential of the West to their yoke before the increasingly imperialistic United States could grab all of the North West between Oregon and Alaska…Too, the union of the British North American colonies would allow for the more efficient exploitation of the entire area, an exploitation unhindered by regional differences and localized tariffs. The granting of internal autonomy to Quebec under the terms of the BNA Act would help to mask the economic exploitation of that province, just as the granting of internal autonomy to Canada as a whole would help to make the continued British domination of the entire country."

The underlying point to Confederation is that only the comprador bourgeoisie had the wherewithal to rule the new colonial confederation. Any demands raised by the middle class, by farmers or by the national bourgeoisie could be met within the imperial system. The working class was in 1867 not a powerful enough factor to challenge the existent state.

Points three and four delineate the role of political parties in serving different imperial masters and different comprador factions. What was above called the "capitulationist-reformist bourgeoisie of Toronto" was the original patron of the "Grit" or Liberal Party; the Montreal compradors were originally represented by the "Tory" or Conservative Party. Of particular note is the deeper analysis of the NDP. Although in objective essence the NDP does not differ from

the other parties a different tack must be taken in combating social democracy. This strategy is termed “winning the progressive section of the NDP:”

> “It is important for the independence movement to maintain a correct, well-considered policy towards the NDP for the obvious reason that both among the rank and file members and the general supporters of the NDP there are many people who either now support or readily can be won over to a pro-independence, pro-socialist position. As social democratic parties everywhere do, the NDP appeals for mass support precisely to those people who want social change but think social change can occur under imperialism. Historically, social democracy has been one of the major political developments of imperialism and on more than one occasion it has stepped in to save imperialism from collapse. The Labour Party of England is just the latest of social democratic regimes to completely betray the very workers whose interests they are supposed to serve. There is no reason to suppose that the NDP will behave any differently from its European social democratic predecessors; we do not have to project into the future to see the role played by the NDP government of Manitoba or the labour bureaucrats who control the party federally and provincially.
>
> The same labour bureaucrats who keep the Canadian trade union movement suffering under the misrule of the pro-imperialist AFL/CIO leadership control the NDP.”

Here is again a realization that mistakes had been made in divorcing facets of the same struggle, one from the other. Given the PWM analysis of both the trade union movement and the NDP it would seem the weaker strategy to fight for Canadian unions only in the union movement and not within the social democratic milieu as well. It was probably subjective revulsion at what was thought to be the sham ‘socialist party’ that caused the adventurism resulting in expulsion from the NDP.

To digress for a moment before dealing with the culminating point, the need to create an omnifaceted independence movement, there is a final point on economic dependency. Raw statistics may be boring, especially several pages of such, but a few selections will indicate the

overall picture. US direct investment in Canada by 1966 was in excess of 16.1 billion dollars (US). Combined US investment in Great Britain, West Germany, France, Australia, Venezuela and Brazil (the next six nations in rank of US investment) was 16.7 billions (US). These six nations had a combined population of over 220 millions to Canada's 20 million. Per capita investment was therefore approximately eleven times higher in Canada than was the average for the other six. These statistics are derived from a plethora of such in the section entitled 'American Control' – they are merely some of the more provocative.

The next following section is logically entitled 'Effects of American Control.' Part of this section, penned by the present writer last decade, aims partly to explain regional disparities through dependency theory:

> "Our relatively high standard of living obscures to some people our colonial position. After all, it is said, we have one of the highest living standards in the world, how could we be a colony? We must emphasize again that what defines our colonial status is <u>not</u> how we compare with this or that country in terms of living standard, or literacy, or industrialization, or the number of people in high schools, or any other such indicator – what defines us as a colony is our relationship to the US. And, in fact, if we compare our living standards to those in the US we can see precisely the effects of this colonial relationship. The latest figures on incomes are those published by the Economic Council of Canada about two years ago. Placing the US average at 100, the report showed the comparative standing to be: Ontario, 83; BC, 80; Prairies, 71; Quebec, 62; Maritimes, 47. Seven of the eight regions in the US had income averages higher than Ontario – Canada's highest. California had an average 60 percent higher than Ontario, and only the US Southeast (states such as Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi) had an average income slightly lower than Ontario – and the US government has declared their Southeast a poverty zone. Even these figures do not tell the whole story for there must also be taken into consideration the fact that we pay up to a third higher prices for a wide range of consumer goods, so that <u>real</u> incomes are still lower in comparison to those of US workers."

Apart from possible disputes over validity of such a presentation of ECC data, it is interesting in that the writer seems to encourage contradiction. He states "that what defines our colonial status is not how we compare with this or that other country in terms of living standard" and then goes on to base the argument on just such a comparison. It might have been better stated that while living standards are not fundamental in identifying metropole-hinterland relations, they may still be useful to demonstrate such relationships.

In any event the Movement had now analysed past history and the present situation: there remains only the future. The swan song had a final note – the call for an independence movement.

TOWARD INDEPENDENCE

What was touched upon earlier, before our digression into economic control was the Movement's new approach to the NDP. As indicated, this was but one facet of a comprehensive strategy to combat imperialism on all fronts in coordination. In addition to capturing the more progressive elements of the NDP it was deemed necessary to expose the Liberal, Conservative and Social Credit Parties for their connivance in imperial control.

The Movement was further directing itself to work within the student movement in "as broad an anti-imperialist base as possible." The PWM was to retain its essential line within an anti-imperialist, pro-independence united front.

At this time also the anti-poverty movement was surfacing (along with ecology groups, community-control organizations etc.). Into these areas the PWM was to take the 'line' – into women's groups, unemployed betterment committees, peace organizations – and point out that socialism and socialism alone could offer a solution. They were not to act as missionaries however, but were to "serve the people" in the words of Chairman Mao. They were to undergo the struggles of these single issue organizations and to point out lessons, being assured that their analysis would be vindicated by events.

That this did not happen is only so lamentably true. Many individuals from the Movement working in these areas experienced frustration as these organizations became governmentally co-opted (then embraced co-option many times as their raison d'etre). In some instances, as the Movement disintegrated, former PWs continued to work in these fields and embraced single-issue philosophies themselves, continuing to mouth the Marxist rhetoric that they might never have deeply understood.

It was within the trade union movement, in the fight for rank and file controlled Canadian unions that the PWM had thought most clearly and had predicted events most accurately. This would continue to be so for the most committed activists, even after dissolution. The central core of the PWM's argument for six years remained the same at the end. It had been tested, modified, researched and elabourated and was still seen to be:

> "An independent Canadian trade union centre cannot substitute for an independence movement. But an effective independence movement in Canada

> will not be possible as long as the political aspects of the trade unions basically reflect the needs of US imperialism."

CONCLUSION

We have seen that the PWM was that rarity for far-left political groups – a proletarian based organization. How this shaped their policy and political work we have examined to a degree. Why they failed and where they fell short are legitimate questions for discussion, and will be the topics of a further paper.

In closing, it could be observed that history has a long memory, but history itself is long. It could very well be that the PWM was not wrong, but perhaps inept, perhaps ahead of its time. History has yet to pass judgement.

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